

Welcome To

REPAIR

**Rivertowns Episcopal Parishes
Action on Inclusion and Race**

September 22, 2021

What Is Critical Race Theory (CRT)?

“Critical Race Theory, or CRT, is an academic and legal framework that denotes that **systemic racism is part of American society** — from education and housing to employment and healthcare. Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism is more than the result of individual bias and prejudice. It is embedded in laws, policies and institutions that uphold and reproduce racial inequalities.”

Source: “Critical Race Theory: Frequently Asked Questions,”
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund website

Some Key Moments in the History of Critical Race Theory

1980: Derrick Bell, Jr., resigns from Harvard to protest discriminatory hiring practices. In response, Kimberlé Crenshaw and classmates organize their own “Alternative Course,” centered on study of Bell’s book *Race, Racism, and American Law*.

1986-1987: Annual conferences of liberal Critical Legal Studies scholars become a forum in which scholars of color advocate a deeper analysis of how race is shaped by the law.

1989: Scholarly conference titled “New Dimensions in Critical Race Theory” is organized by Kimberlé Crenshaw, effectively founding the field of CRT.

1993: President Clinton nominates U. Penn professor Lani Guinier to run the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, then withdraws the nomination under fire.

1995: Gloria Ladson-Billings and others begin applying CRT to fields beyond the law, such as education. By 2002, twenty U.S. law schools are teaching courses that cover CRT.

2019: *New York Times* publishes a series of articles on the history of American slavery titled *The 1619 Project*. The series soon comes under attack, along with the journalist who helped to launch it, Nikole Hannah-Jones.

September, 2020: President Trump issues Executive Order 13950 banning “divisive concepts” and “race or sex stereotyping” in training programs used by federal contractors.

Some Key Figures in the Shaping of Critical Race Theory

Derrick Bell, Jr.

Kimberlé Crenshaw

Cheryl Harris

Richard Delgado

Patricia Williams

Gloria Ladson-Billings

Tara Yosso

Some Basic Principles of Critical Race Theory

Source: “A Lesson on Critical Race Theory” by Janel George, *Human Rights* magazine, January 11, 2021, American Bar Association

- “Recognition that **race is not biologically real** but is socially constructed and socially significant. [CRT] recognizes that science (as demonstrated in the Human Genome Project) refutes the idea of biological racial differences.”

- “Acknowledgement that **racism is a normal feature of society** and is embedded within systems and institutions, like the legal system, that replicate racial inequality. This dismisses the idea that racist incidents are aberrations but instead are manifestations of structural and systemic racism.”

- “Rejection of popular understandings about racism, such as arguments that confine racism to a few “bad apples.” CRT recognizes that **racism is codified in law**, embedded in structures, and woven into public policy. CRT rejects claims of meritocracy or “colorblindness.” CRT recognizes that it is the systemic nature of racism that bears primary responsibility for reproducing racial inequality.”

- “Recognition of **the relevance of people’s everyday lives** to scholarship. This includes embracing the lived experiences of people of color, including those preserved through storytelling, and rejecting deficit-informed research that excludes the epistemologies of people of color.”

BUT NOTE:

- “CRT scholars did not share the approach of destabilizing social injustice by destabilizing the law. Many CRT scholars had witnessed how the law could be used to help secure and protect civil rights. Therefore, critical race theorists recognized that, while the law could be used to deepen racial inequality, **it also held potential as a tool for emancipation** and for securing racial equality.”

A Close Look at the Controversy

FROM THE "IT MIGHT JUST BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO WORK" DEPARTMENT:

NO, THE MASKS ARE ONLY TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN FROM CRITICAL RACE THEORY



OH...

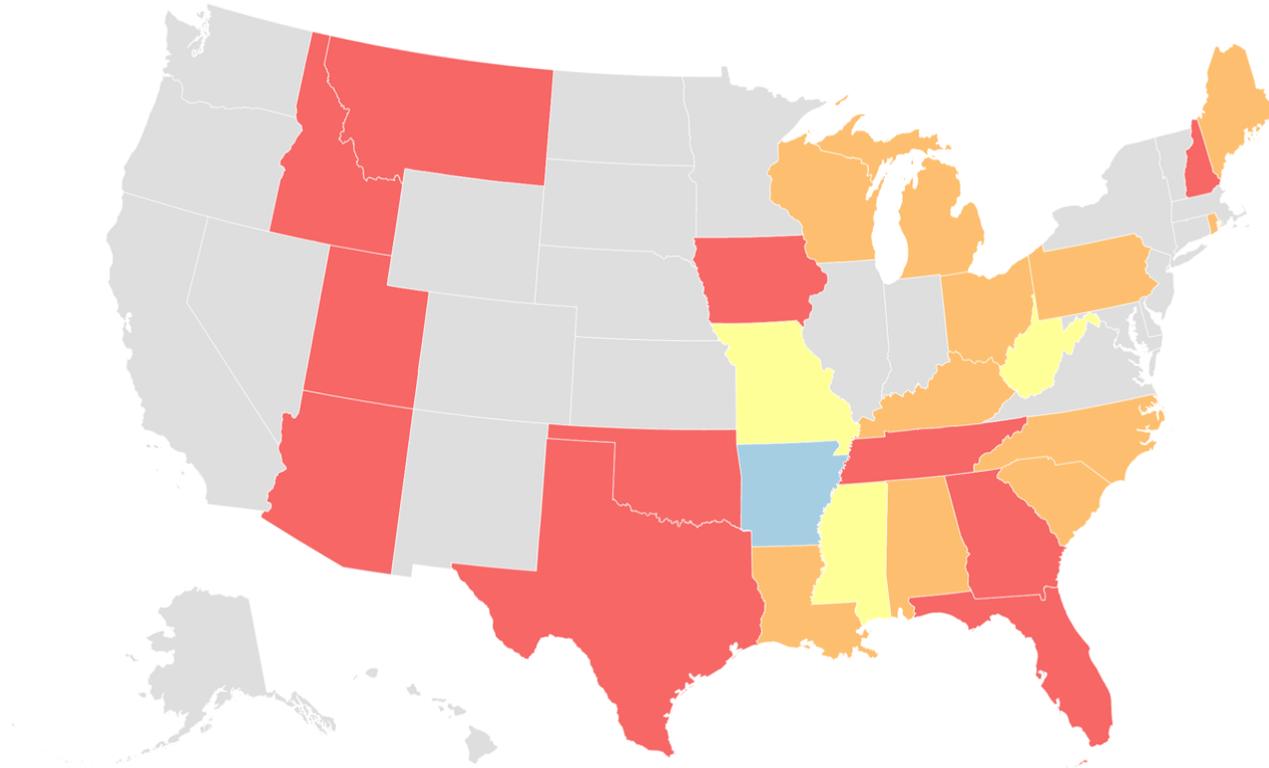


CRT as a political football

Legislative actions

Critical Race Theory Laws by State

Bill introduced or pre-filed Law passed or other state level action Legislation withdrawn Bill died in committee



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SHARES



As of June 30, 2021, 23 states have introduced some form of gag order legislation with respect to racial justice, Critical Race Theory, and the teaching of racial injustice in American history. Nine states have fully passed some version of the bans. (Source: [African American Policy Forum](https://www.africanamericanpolicyforum.org/)) via <https://www.naacpldf.org/critical-race-theory-faq/>

Legislative actions

To take a closer look at these laws:

- ▶ **The Brookings Institution**

- <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2021/07/02/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/>

- ▶ Very few name critical race theory by name

How did we get here from CRT as an academic theory?

- ▶ Long history of trying to push Critical Race Theory as a divisive issue
 - ▶ For example, 1993: President Clinton's nomination and subsequent rejection of Lani Guinier to head the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division (“divisive writings”)
 - ▶ 2012 outcry over an Obama video with him, while a student, introducing Derrick Bell (<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1012696188>)
- ▶ Christopher Rufo (documentary filmmaker turned conservative activist)



Christopher F. Rufo ✂
@realchrisrufo

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Replying to @realchrisrufo and @ConceptualJames

We have successfully frozen their brand—"critical race theory"—into the public conversation and are steadily driving up negative perceptions. We will eventually turn it toxic, as we put all of the various cultural insanities under that brand category.

3:14 PM · Mar 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Rufo: CRT is “The Perfect Villain”

- ▶ Receives forwarded materials about DEI training in Seattle; labels it CRT; publicizes
- ▶ Appears on Tucker Carlson Tonight (early September 2020)
 - ▶ **“Conservatives need to wake up. This is an existential threat to the United States. And the bureaucracy, even under Trump, is being weaponized against core American values.....I call on the President to immediately issue (an) executive order—to stamp out this destructive, divisive, pseudoscientific ideology.”**
- ▶ **Gets a call from Mark Meadows, Chief of Staff, reaching out on behalf of the former President, who had seen him on Carlson’s show.**
- ▶ **Assists in drafting an executive order, issued by the White House in late September. Bans federal agencies, contractors, and grant recipients from conducting trainings and programs that address systemic racism and sexism.***
- ▶ Has reportedly advised on the language for more than ten bills; when conservative politicians talk of CRT, they often borrow Rufo’s phrases
- ▶ Rufo has named CRT as **“the perfect villain”**

*rescinded by President Biden on his first day in office

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/annals-of-inquiry/how-a-conservative-activist-invented-the-conflict-over-critical-race-theory>

<https://www.aapf.org/truthbetold>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/06/19/critical-race-theory-rufo-republicans/>

Other terms in the “brand category”

- ▶ Conflating CRT with other terms, including the other CRT
 - ▶ Equity. White privilege. 1619 Project. Bias. Slavery. Racism. Anti-racism. Diversity. Inclusion. Black Lives Matter. Basically, any conversation about race that makes white people uncomfortable. (Also sexism, lgbtq rights)
 - ▶ Culturally Responsive/Relevant Teaching and Leadership (the other CRT)

Local impact: Efforts to “take back our schools”

Rhetoric about Critical Race Theory is being used to undermine efforts by public school systems to promote equity in their programs.

Why schools?

- ▶ Republicans hope the local battles will mobilize conservative voters in next year’s midterm elections and beyond.
- ▶ Democrats have benefited from popular economic legislation but appear vulnerable on “culturally divisive” issues. Using the guise of “protecting” children gets attention.
- ▶ Steve Bannon (2021): “The path to save the nation is very simple – it’s going to go through the school boards.”
 - ▶ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/critical-race-theory-invades-school-boards-help-conservative-groups-n1270794>
 - ▶ <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/24/1009839021/uncovering-who-is-driving-the-fight-against-critical-race-theory-in-schools>

About 165+ national groups funding/mobilizing local efforts to influence schools:

- ▶ <https://www.noleftturn.us/>
- ▶ <https://www.saveourschoolsforwestchesterchildren.org/welcome>
- ▶ <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/24/1009839021/uncovering-who-is-driving-the-fight-against-critical-race-theory-in-schools>

Schools as a CRT battleground

- ▶ Pressure on administrators, teachers; recall/pressure on school boards
- ▶ Rockland County
 - ▶ Clarkstown Schools Superintendent Martin Cox resigned 9/15/21
 - ▶ Recent controversy over masks, “postponed” Black Lives Matter student presentation
 - ▶ Cox cites “personal reasons”
 - ▶ Breitbart, Rufo: claiming victory, saying Cox resigned “following parent controversy over critical race theory”



Christopher F. Rufo ✂
@realchrisrufo

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BREAKING: A school board in Rockland County, New York, forces the resignation of superintendent Martin Cox, who was pushing for a critical race theory-based curriculum.

- ▶ Philadelphia
 - ▶ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/06/us/critical-race-theory-philadelphia> (view from 1:50)

Other thoughts on this topic can be found at

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-is-critical-race-theory-and-why-is-it-under-attack/2021/05>

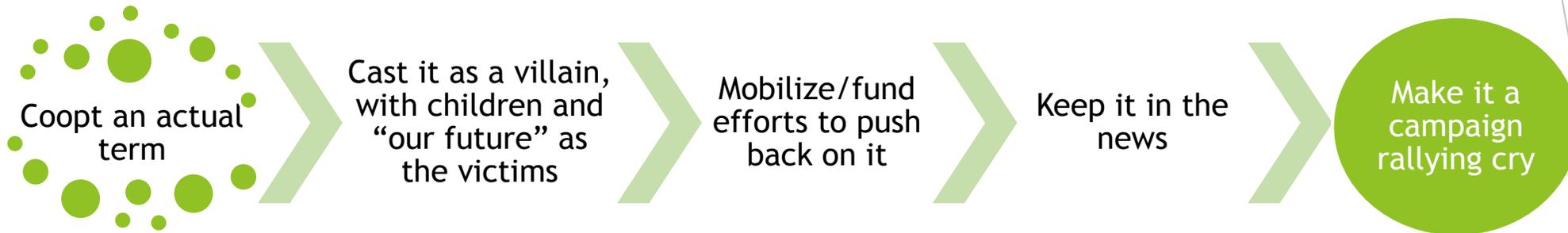
Revisiting the question:

How did we get here from CRT as an academic theory?

- ▶ Barbara SPRUNT (Producer, NPR's Washington desk):...this is a **perfect culture war issue**. Unlike issues like taxes or foreign policy, this is something that **strikes people at their very identity**...I spoke with Christine Matthews....
- ▶ Christine MATTHEWS (President, Bellwether Research and public opinion pollster): I think it's just one more addition to the **culture war that the Republicans really want to fight**. And Republicans are...**making Democrats seem as extreme and threatening to white culture as possible**.
- ▶ SPRUNT: Matthews says that **talk news can really keep this issue top of mind for voters**, even though the midterms are over a year away....A study from Media Matters, a left-leaning nonprofit, recently found that **nearly 1,300 mentions of critical race theory were on Fox News over a 3 1/2-month period**.

From <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/20/1008449181/understanding-the-republican-opposition-to-critical-race-theory> Weekend Edition Sunday, Lulu Garcia-Navarro, Host

In short....



Why this? Why now?

- ▶ Kimberlé Crenshaw: “**Reform itself creates its own backlash**, which reconstitutes the problem in the first place....**This is a post-George Floyd backlash**. The reason why we’re having this conversation is that the line of scrimmage has moved.” And that is why criticism of CRT is no longer solely the work of conservative academics - but has become the villain cited by conservative political and media figures.
- ▶ Coordinated **backlash** to the realization of a true multi-racial democracy in America. (<https://www.naacpldf.org/critical-race-theory-faq/>)
 - ▶ After the 2020 election, which included record turnout among Black voters, states passed the strictest voting laws in decades.
 - ▶ When millions of people took to the streets to protest police violence, states responded by passing laws criminalizing protest.
 - ▶ Now, as individuals across the country, of all races and backgrounds, are coming to recognize the history of systemic racism and its ongoing impact, states are responding by attempting to silence discussions of these issues.

Responses to “Critical Race Theory” bans

Teachers working within and around the recently written laws



Mythinformed MKE @MythinformedMKE · Sep 18

Iowa teacher proudly explains how she is circumventing the **Critical Race Theory** ban.

Instead of teaching CRT, she reviews the CRT concepts that are called out in the law, and encourages her kids to ask questions about the concepts.

This is her CRT ban workaround.



386

810

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An Iowa public secondary school teacher allows students to frame the class outline in response to an examination of Iowa’s law banning CRT, hf-802.

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1439318566914994176>

Responses to “Critical Race Theory” bans

Students pushing back

- ▶ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/15/us/book-ban-controversy-pennsylvania/index.html>



melinda d. anderson
@mdawriter



An all-white school board in York, Pennsylvania has banned a list of books and resources, including a children’s book about Rosa Parks. All of the banned materials are by or about people of color, which the school board president called “a coincidence.”



Students fight back against a book ban that has a Pennsylvania comm...
Students in a southern Pennsylvania school district are battling the latest example of panic spreading over how history and race are taught...
[cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com)

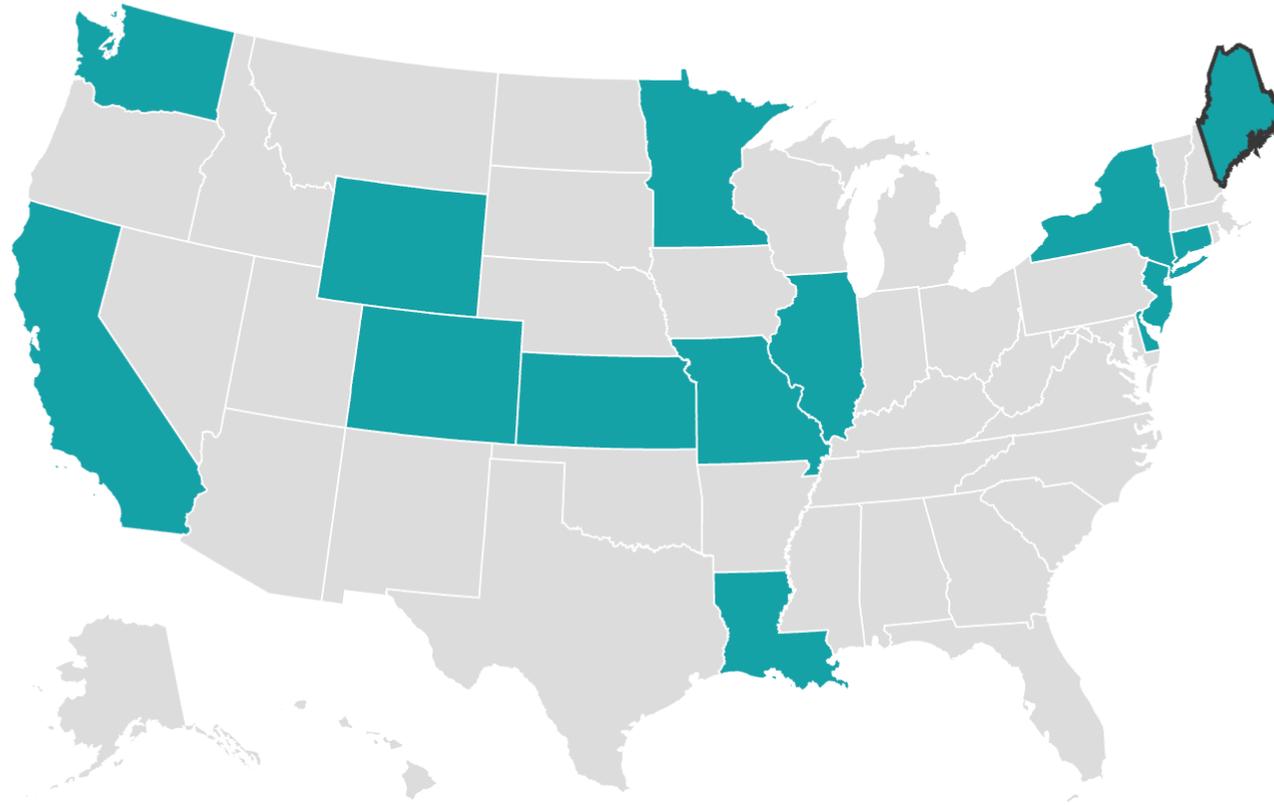
9:54 AM · Sep 16, 2021



Expanding U.S. History education

We have tracked efforts in 15 states to **expand** education on racism, bias, the contributions of specific racial or ethnic groups to U.S. history, or related topics.

Click or hover for more details.



For example:

HB 635

Louisiana

Black history students eligible for state-funded scholarship

High school students seeking to earn the state-funded Taylor Opportunity Program for Students scholarship may now take *African American history* to fulfill the scholarship eligibility requirements. Previously, students had to take courses such as *Western Civilization*, *European History*, or *History of Religion*, but Black history was not on the approved list. The legislation, proposed by Rep. Cedric Glover of Shreveport was signed into law by Gov. John Bel Edwards on June 14

Actions we can take in our own communities....

- ▶ Be aware of groups looking to restrict free speech and dialogue on race, racism, slavery, oppression, critical race theory
- ▶ Urge members of school boards to use their influence to resist bans on truth and defend the rights of teachers and students to discuss race in a classroom setting.
- ▶ Local elections have the power to shape the future of your school district. Vote in your school board elections. Know the candidates.
- ▶ Other thoughts?

"Privilege means that you owe a debt. You were born with it. You didn't ask for it. And you didn't pay for it either. No one is blaming you for having it. You are lovely, human, and amazing. Being a citizen of a society requires work from everyone within that society. It is up to you whether you choose to acknowledge the work that is yours to do. It is up to you whether you choose to pay this debt and how you choose to do so."--Courtney Ariel

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NEWSLETTER / JUNE, 2020

The Original American Epidemic Is Racism--A Virtual REPAIR Meeting

Unarmed black citizens wantonly killed by police. Peaceful protestors assaulted with tear gas and rubber bullets. Angry politicians demanding "Law and order." So far, so familiar.

But maybe this time is different? Demonstrations persisting for weeks, not days . . . millions of white Americans agreeing that systemic racism is a real problem . . . even some conservative politicians declaring "Black lives matter." Our world feels as if it *may* be at an inflection point.

Join us on **Wednesday, June 17**, at 7:30 p.m., when we'll gather via Zoom to discuss it all--how we are feeling; how today's events connect with our nation's long story; the potential for change; and what we are doing to respond.

**To receive our monthly e-newsletter,
send a request to
info@repairrivertowns.org**

Thank you for participating in

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